

Hon. John Adler, 9/23/2009

Thank you, Representative Hirono, for bringing this important resolution to the floor.

I also want to thank Chairman Miller and Ranking Member Kline for their leadership on the Education and Labor Committee.

I introduced House Resolution 491 earlier this year with bipartisan support to encourage all institutions of higher education throughout our great country to become members of the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges consortium.

Servicemembers face numerous challenges in their pursuit of higher education, either while they are still on active duty or a newly-returned veteran.

Oftentimes, these brave men and women have trouble attaining college degrees because of their frequent relocations, and this difficulty is also shared by their families.

We should make every effort to ensure that their transition from service to civilian life is smooth and successful.

To enhance access to undergraduate educational opportunities for servicemembers and their families, institutions should maintain flexibility in their programs and procedures, particularly in admissions, credit transfer and recognition of other applicable learning, including, whenever possible, that learning gained in the military.

Since its creation in 1972, more than 1,800 universities, colleges, and technical schools in the United States have joined this important group.

In my state of New Jersey, 30 institutions have become members of in the SOC Consortium, including Burlington County College, Ocean County College and, most recently, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Camden Campus.

I applaud these institutions for providing greater education opportunities to servicemembers and their families.

Our veterans, who have selflessly served our country, deserve every opportunity to succeed when they return home.

SOC Consortium member institutions provide servicemembers, their families, and veterans with

the flexibility they need to obtain college degrees.

Each year, thousands and thousands of servicemembers and their family members enroll into associate, bachelor, and graduate level degree programs offered by SOC consortium members on school campuses, military installations, and armories within the United States and overseas.

This consortium helps to ease the transition from combat to college and helps our veterans achieve the education to become successful and competitive in an ever changing working environment.

In addition to encouraging those institutions of higher education that are not yet participating in the SOC Consortium to become members, I would also like to take another opportunity to applaud the institutions that are already members of this important group.

Thank you to all SOC member institutions for helping all those heroes who keep America safe and free.

All institutions of higher education in the nation should strive to provide our servicemembers with the tools and opportunities they need to achieve their educational, vocational, and career goals.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this important resolution and I yield back the remainder of my time.